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AN

# A D D R E S S

ON THE

## CHARACTER OF THE COLONY

FOUNDED BY

### GEORGE POOPHAM,

AT THE

MOUTH OF THE KENNEBEC RIVER AUGUST 19TH, [O. S.] 1607.

DELIVERED IN BATH,

ON THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THAT EVENT.

BY HON. EDWARD E. BOURNE,

OF KENNEBUNK.

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Delivered and Published at the request of the Committee on the Commemoration.

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P O R T L A N D .

P R I N T E D B Y B R O W N T H U R S T O N ,

1864.



At a meeting of the Executive Committee on the Popham Celebration, held at Bath, August 29th, 1864, after the proceedings of the the Two Hundred and fifty-seventh Anniversary of the Settlement of the First English Colony on the shores of New England, on motion of Hon. Charles J. Gilman, it was

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Executive Committee be presented to the Hon. Edward E. Bourne, for his able and instructive Address, delivered on this occasion, and that he be solicited to furnish a copy thereof for publication.

EDWARD BALLARD, *Secretary of the Ex. Com.*

BRUNSWICK, Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1864.



## A D D R E S S.

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THE commemoration at Fort Popham in 1862 has called forth from the public press some severe criticisms on the moral character of the Sagadahock colonists of 1607. These strictures, it is believed by the committee of arrangements for this eclebration, have no foundation in history ; and I have been requested to devote this hour to their examination. It is strange that an occasion so full of historic mementoes, and which awakened the sympathies of so large a concourse of worthy and intelligent men, should have been seized upon for the purpose of calumniating that little band. They had abandoned all the genial associations of home life, exposed themselves to hazards, over the wide ocean, of which but few of them had any experience, for the acknowledged noble purpose of enlarging the area of civilization, planting the Christian religion, and opening the way for a more extensive commerce, with little to cheer them but the hope of success, and a confidence in the watchful care of a beneficent Providence. And it is stranger still, when it is remembered that the commemoration was in

unison with the consecration which years had been bestowing and fastening on the spot, which the colonists had chosen as the base of their honorable enterprise. Drake, than whom there is not a more indefatigable searcher into the arcana of the past, and thence no one more truly versed in the facts of our early history, in speaking of the Sagadahock says, “It is *celebrated* as the place where the first settlement was made in New England.” If *celebrated* hitherto, why complain that the impulses of a Christian people, reverencing the fortitude, energy, and self-sacrificing spirit of those whose temporary abode there had imparted to the spot a lasting interest, had led them to respond to what the annals of time had already declared, and to come together to honor those noble spirits who had imparted to it its hallowed memories? If *celebrated* for centuries, why now attempt to divest it of its attractions?

But though the criticism, to which the commemoration has been subjected, may have been unwarranted, and the ignominy which it has attempted to fasten on the characters of the first settlers on our shores, entirely unauthorized, I do not draw from it any incentives to uncharitable retort. History is only valuable as it is true. No man, therefore, can regard it unimportant that alleged facts should be diligently canvassed, that the fidelity of the record may be determined. Every historical student must appreciate the wisdom and necessity of a vigilant providence, that falsehood shall not be permitted to come in and usurp the place

of what is real and substantial. So that though I may regard the animadversions of the writer, who has endeavored, through much laborious study, to impeach the moral status of the colony at Sagadahock, as unsustained by the historical evidence which he has adduced, I can still entertain for him the respect to which he is entitled, from his faithful and persevering exertions to bring to light the facts of history, over which the dust of ages was fast gathering. The labors of such men seldom meet with pecuniary remuneration. They are public beneficiaries in the best sense. We have some of this class among our own citizens, whose claims have never yet been fully appreciated. Willis and Sewall and Poor, with others, have laid us under an abiding indebtedness.

Sympathizing then as I do, with the devoted laborers in historical research, I proceed to examine in a kindly spirit, the objections which have been raised to these anniversary proceedings. There is no reason for doubt as to the location of the Popham Colony. The site of the fort now building, is identical with the Indian Sabino. The objections to the celebration are based on the alleged entire failure of the enterprise, and the moral character of the immediate agents in it. The colony is said to have been composed of men, in the home country, "endangered by law;" and being thus constituted, it had no life in itself, and thence soon ended, without fulfilling any profitable purpose.

Much light on the subject before us has been given by the publication of the Memorial Volume. This work is a val-

uable contribution to the historic literature of the State. The leading articles, with the notes appended, cannot fail to bring material aid to those who would acquaint themselves with its early colonization. The many authorities cited, in my opinion, establish the positions which the author of the address assumes. My first impressions from reading the animadversions of a part of the press and of some historical men, immediately following the first gathering at Fort Popham, were, that our commemoration was not based on a very desirable foundation. But this new volume dispelled all misgivings in that direction. By a thorough examination of its references, and various works relating to the first settlement of New England, I am well satisfied with the judgment that there was no error in our proceedings.

No expedition or enterprise derives its character from the sub-agents, to whom is intrusted the physical labor of its accomplishment. Persons are employed in thousands of great operations, who impart no character to the work. The discovery of this western continent by Columbus, and the establishment of the Plymouth colony, would lose none of their greatness, value, or importance, from the mutinous or contentious spirit, which may have been manifested on board the ships, on which they were wafted to these shores. In the grand army of the United States, leaving their homes and jeopardizing their lives to subdue a rebellion, involving all the interests of freedom, morality, and religion, while the

souls of a vast portion of them are moved by the impulses of a noble and exalted patriotism, there are undoubtedly many in whose breasts burns no true love of country, who have been endangered by the law, and even received its merited judgments. But while a patriotic soldiery is infinitely better than one steeped in treason and crime, the enterprise in which all are engaged is not shorn of its grandeur by this commingling of patriotism and vice in the great work of saving a government consecrated in the hearts of all the true and the good.

I propose to review the two principal objections which have been suggested, having carefully examined the authorities on which they are based, as well as what relevant history was at hand. I think the preponderance of evidence sustains the position, that this attempt at colonization, if objectors choose so to term it, was one of the agencies of American civilization. That, in some considerable measure, it initiated those transformations by which the savage wilderness has been converted into a land of commercial enterprise, of literature, and religion; that its results have ministered to all subsequent movements tending to the development of humanity on these western shores.

The precise motives which animated its projectors do not appear to be material in adjudicating on the matter. Whether instigated by religion, fame, or money, the same consequences may flow from a succession of acts. And here it is not inappropriate to remark, that there has not

seemed to me to be any occasion for collision or excitement, on the part of those who have been wont to reverence the memory of the brave men who landed at Plymouth in 1620. It is only claimed for the Sagadahock colony, that it was the first attempt at colonization; that it secured this territory to King James, and began the settlement of New England—while, as I understand the facts, the emigrants at Plymouth did not leave the father-land for any such objects. The Puritans had in view only the free enjoyment of their religion. Colonization was not one of the impelling motives, but only an incident or necessary result. No reasonable man can claim for them any such purpose. The same motives which induced their first departure from England for Holland, led them over the waters. They did not, of course, go to colonize Amsterdam or Leyden. That work had been effectually done, long before their emigration was contemplated. And I may further add, that it was never in their hearts to colonize New England. It was only by Divine intervention, or the hand of man, that they were compelled to do so. They intended to go to Hudson River, or South Virginia, but, against their will, were landed at Plymouth. In common parlance, therefore, this landing was accidental and originated no claim, on their part, to the grateful remembrance of subsequent generations.

If it is said, that the motives of the Puritans in leaving the home of all their sympathies, were more noble and grand, than those of the Sagadahock colonists; I have no disposition to controvert that assertion. Humanity was never, in the

history of the world, more highly exalted than in the persons of those, who, from the impulses of a pure Christian conscientiousness, submitted cheerfully to the sacrifices which were inevitably to follow the disruption of all the genial, happy associations of life, and to the deprivations and hardships of the land to which they were to be wafted.

But our business now is with the colonization of New England, and not with the moral attributes of the settlers, excepting so far as is necessary to rebut the charge, that the Sagadahock enterprise was an entire failure ; and that this failure was the necessary result of the obliquity of all engaged in it. We do not claim for these adventurers or their employers, any extraordinary moral excellence. We believe that they were fair representatives of the human family.

And who were the projectors of this colony ? And who were Sir Ferdinando Gorges, and Sir John Popham ? Were they men who would be likely to select a company of outlaws, vagabonds, idlers, or indifferent hirelings, to carry forward an enterprise in which their personal interests were so deeply involved, and which required so much foresight, discretion, energy, and resolution ? In the history of the follies of humanity, is there to be found such fatal obtuseness, in the action of an intelligent manhood, as that one should deliberately minister to the frustration of a noble object, on which his heart was firmly fixed ? All accounts which have come down to us of the character of Gorges exclude the idea of any such incongruity in his conceptions or acts. A

proposition to carry out his purposes by such a suicidal initiation of the grand movement of colonization, could not for an instant have taken hold of his sympathies, and secured his approbation. All the writers of the age in which he lived, accord to them not only an enterprising but a discreet and considerate spirit. And how could they hesitate to do so? The patronage of the king and his council, and of others of moral, civil, and political eminence, precluded all cavil and all adverse judgment in that regard. From his active, vigorous, and executive ability, he was called to fill various important offices; first, in the navy; then as governor of the fort and island of Plymouth; then as a leading member of the Plymouth Company for the colonization of the new world; then as treasurer and governor of the Council of Trade; and when one was wanted to harmonize the conflicting interests of New England, and to work a reformation of the evils which had grown out of them, as well as to subserve the predominant objects of religion and civil government, he was selected by the king and his advisers as one distinguished for his fidelity, circumspection, and administrative knowledge, and meet and able for that employment, and was commissionod as Governor of New Eng land. And to this, Thornton, in his "Landing at Cape Ann," adds his high commendation in the remark, that "no adverse results disheartened him, but he persevered in collecting all possible information bearing on the great work before him; and that next to Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Gorges stands out the most conspicuous in the History of Northern

Colonization." And in another place, "we proudly claim him as the founder of Maine."

This well established character has met with no impeachment in the literature of all subsequent years. To this brief sketch of Gorges, I may well add the fact stated by himself, that he never took a step in any matter of magnitude, without consultation with the Earl of Southampton.

And who was Sir John Popham? An eminent Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench in England; an elevation demanding moral and intellectual endowments, to which few can lay claim. Notwithstanding any unfavorable manifestations which may be found in his younger days, at the period of which we are now speaking, he had abjured all the wayward propensities of his early manhood. One of his personal attributes during his judicial life, was an abhorrence of crime. Perhaps this element of his character was generated by his own previous experience. Let it be so. This fact in no degree detracts from the moral substratum on which his elevation to the bench was based. He would not have been appointed to an office, in the administration of which the well being of the inhabitants of the kingdom was so deeply involved, without plenary evidence of a radical change of character. Such changes are by no means uncommon in the history of the race. His commission recognized him as trusty, well beloved, and faithful; and whatever charges the most diligent and persevering research now may suggest against his moral, social, or intellectual charac-

ter, in my view, they are fully answered by the cotemporary records, which I hold to be of more value than the mere opinion of irresponsible writers at any subsequent period. Croke's Reports in England, are of the highest authority with the profession. Lord Coke directed the particular attention of students to them. These reports embrace the adjudications of Popham; and at the close of his judicial career by death, the reporter says: "Upon Wednesday, the tenth day of June, (5th James) this term, Sir John Popham, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, departed this life, being a most reverend judge, and a person of great learning and integrity." This official enunciation covers the whole ground. If Holt and Hyde regarded his reports of no authority, Coke was of a different opinion. So was also Croke.

But his judicial stauding is not very material to our purpose. His learning and integrity are consecrated by the record; and all contemporaneous authority recognized him as one morally and intellectually ranking with the highest of the age. Strachey denominates him "the upright and noble gentleman." Capt. John Smith calls him "that most memorable judge"—"that honorable patron of virtue." Hubbard also, in his History of New England, speaks of him as one of great authority and influence: as the noble patron of justice and virtue; as a noble patriot. Increase Mather calls him "the noble lord;" Palfrey, "that eminent person." The same exalted character is substantially awarded him by the Company in England, in the record that "it pleased God to take from us this worthy member,

the Lord Chief Justice ;” and further that his death came over them with such a withering influence as to paralyze their hands for further exertions. Purchas also says, “the death of the Lord Chief Justice did so astonish the hearts of the most part of the adventurers, as some grew cold, and some did wholly abandon the business.”

In an interesting article on Ancient Pemaquid, as published in our Historical Collections, the author clearly enunciates his concurrent opinion as to his high standing. In speaking of Sabino he says, “The President of this enterprise, Popham, died there; and thus New England counts among the earliest, if not the very first of her ‘illustrious dead,’ the worthy brother of the Lord Chief Justice of England.” As much as to say, worthy and illustrious because of his relationship to Chief Justice Popham. This is the only foundation on which he here bases these attributes of his character. So also does the same author award to him equally honorable meed in his citation from the Journal of Parliament. It is wonderful how readily even the most honest and diligent searchers after truth, by the inspirations of a special object, may be diverted from a candid and fair examination and judgment of historical facts. Blackstone says, “the enacting of penalties ought to be calmly and maturely considered, by persons who know what provisions the laws have already made to remedy the mischiefs complained of; who can, from experience, foresee the probable consequences of those which are now proposed, and who will judge without passion or prejudice, how adequate they

are for the evil. Such has been a common mode in this country and Europe, of ameliorating and revising the criminal code. Professional men of learning and experience, not influenced by passion or prejudice, have been called to this important work. Popham was appointed for this high and honorable office from his experience and well recognized understanding of the relation between crime and punishment, and the adaptation of the one for the prevention of the other. That, we know, is the object of all criminal law. He reported his bill for that purpose, in which provision was made that the criminal might be exiled from his country, in commutation for the severer punishment prescribed ; thereby substituting expatriation for the penalty of death ; inaugurating, as we think, a great and benevolent change in criminal jurisprudence, for which he should be remembered and honored by every friend of the race. And yet this passage in his biography is introduced as an impeachment of the moral, social, and judicial standing of this noble and upright judge.

It will be understood also, that this was long before Popham was induced to come into the colonization enterprise at Sagadahock, which was in 1597 ; and that it could have no bearing on his future action or interests in that undertaking ; because it was only when the project was started, ten years after, that on account of his great influence, he was persuaded to engage in it. And beyond this, the act introduced and charged to have been devised by him, as auxiliary to his personal interests in carrying out the Sagadahock enter-

prise, was to expire by its own limitation, with the first session of the next Parliament, which ended in 1601.

Such was Sir John Popham, as is said by Folsom, in the first volume of the historical collections, "one of the most upright and able judges that ever sat upon the English Bench," and at the time of the origination of the Sagadahock colony, "in the zenith of his power and influence, venerable for his age; respected for his wise administration, and strong in the confidence of the crown." His memory is truly consecrated by one of the most magnificent monuments ever erected over the remains of departed worth.

And now let me ask, what man in his senses will believe, that for the execution of this grand project of planting civilization and religion in this new world, a work involving so deeply their individual pecuniary interests, these men would have sent forth a company of rogues, vagabonds, and others "endangered by the law?" Who can believe, that the Lord Chief Justice of England, standing at the head of the judiciary of the realm, could have so ill judged of the proper instrumentalities for effecting a design of such immense magnitude, as to have committed its high destiny to the management of a set of men having no sympathy for the objects in view, which had taken such strong hold of his own heart?

But it is urged that Gorges says he obtained his men with difficulty. To me it is manifest that he referred to his subsequent enterprises, and meant suitable men. In giving his

account of his preparations for the first colony, he suggests no such difficulty. There never was a time yet, when the jails or prisons of England, if accessible for the purpose, would not have afforded men enough for a dozen such plantations. And these criminals would very readily have exchanged imprisonment for a voyage across the ocean. It would be by no means a sure conclusion, had the emigrants been of the character alleged, that they could not have built up a respectable community. The exiles of Siberia have raised up villas creditable to the civilization of any nation. "In elegance and solidity of construction," says a late writer, "these colonies may be compared to the finest villages of Western Europe. Banishment in the place where it is undergone ceases to be considered a disgrace; and he who is not deeply depraved, can only see in it a step to social happiness." But we have no occasion to resort to any hypothesis of this kind. History furnishes no foundation for the scandal, that the criminal law of England furnished the active agents for this company. The evidence is very clear that no such elements entered into its composition.

To what extent the colony was infected with crime, is not alleged. That there should be some of this adventurous band whose previous lives had not accorded with the principles of a sound morality, may very reasonably be supposed. It would be presumptuous in any one to hazard a different opinion. Human frailty is too strongly marked on the face of society to justify any such arrogance. But we do claim, that the testimony is conclusive, that there were

among them men of stamina and worth, well fitted for the enterprise in which they were embarked ; men, whose characters even ennobled this grand adventure for American colonization ; men who would not have submitted to such a fellowship with rogues and vagabonds as their connection with the mission would have demanded. And we know also, that Popham and Gorges, the originators of it, were men of foresight and intellect enough to guard against the admission of such deleterious constituents into a company in which great moral firmness and energetic fidelity were required. If no soul could be thrown into the management of the expedition, they might very surely anticipate a defeat of all their hopes. We may with confidence assert, that they looked well to a reasonable preparation for all the hazards and exigencies which might impend the execution of their noble purposes.

Accordingly, Gorges says, that in 1606 he sent away a ship furnished with men and all necessaries, provisions convenient for the service intended, under the command of Capt. Henry Challoung, a gentleman of good family, industrious, and of fair condition. This ship was taken by the Spaniards, and the purpose of the embarkation thereby defeated.

In the year 1607, Gorges further says, “The Lord Chief Justice, his friends and associates, sent from Plymouth Capt. Popham as President, for that employment, with Capt. Raleigh Gilbert, and divers other gentlemen of note, in three sail of ships, with one hundred landsmen.” As there

were one hundred and twenty in all, there were probably at least twenty whom he calls *men of note*. Seven or eight of these are particularly mentioned by Strachey. The personal character of the several planters, no one would think of setting out on the record.

The array of quotations from various authors, alleging infamy of character in those who made up the colonial companies, appended to one of the publications which has had a free circulation, may have led the incautious reader to the conclusion, that the Sagadahoe colony, which is the subject matter of the whole discourse, was composed of men sent thither by a judgment of court or decree of transportation for crime ; that they were thieves, robbers, vagabonds, and rogues, of every hue and degree. Such is the conclusion which it is presumed the author intended to convey to the mind of the reader. Such is, we suppose, his honest thought. But such a view of their character, we believe, is not justified by reliable historic authority.

Let us place by the side of this, the opinion of Hume, the historian, to whom the world has been accustomed to look with some confidence, for light on the question of England's history. "What renders," he says, "the reign of James memorable, is the commencement of English colonies in America ; colonies established on the noblest footing that has been known in any age or nation." A colony projected in and starting from the home country, on such a basis as is described in the representation of Mr. Thornton, would not seem to add much to the honor of the King, by whom it

was chartered, and under whose auspices it went forth on its mission.

After a careful examination of all the authorities within my reach, and especially the adverse citations to which the public attention has been called, I am inclined to the opinion that the judgment of Hume is entitled to the more favorable regard. My impression is that the Sagadahock colony was remarkable for the high character of those to whom its destiny was committed. Such also seems to have been the opinion of Williamson. "The plantation," he says, "was undertaken with the determination of great and worthy minds." And again, "This colony, the first ever attempted by the English in North Virginia, was planned and begun with the courage, zeal, and beneficence, which did not fear to encounter difficulties, or hazard expense. Its projectors and friends believed a colonial establishment, well organized and prosperous, would be the common resort and asylum of all adventurers to this country, and the means of promoting and spreading other settlements to a wide extent."

Hubbard, the author of the History of New England, having been born a few years after the colony went out, during his younger days must have heard much of it from those who were contemporary with its inception and termination. He speaks of the design of the authors of it to make it a great and flourishing commonwealth; and he deduces that judgment of it principally from the fact that its whole charge was committed to men of quality, who were to reside there

as commanders-in-chief. A few of the company he names with their official designation, as "Capt. George Popham, for President; Capt. Rawley Gilbert, for Admiral; Capt. Edward Harlow, for Master of the Ordnance; Capt. Robert Davis, for Sergeant Major; and for Marshal, Capt. Ellis Best; and for Seeretary, Mr. Seamen. Capt. James Davis was to be commander over the fort when it was built; Mr. Gome Carew was to be Searcher."

These officers, from their titles, imply that there were, at least, as many more of an under grade. All these gentlemen, he says, were to reside in the country, thus laying the foundation of a great superstructure. Gorges' remark, also, that beside those he specially named, there were "divers men of note" in the expedition, would seem to authorize the same conclusion as to the grand design of the projectors. Lord Bacon, also, as says Strachey, "from the beginning, with other lords and earls," was one of the principal counsel applied to, to propagate and guide it; and we know, from his Essays on Plantations, what were his views as to the character of the persons who should be employed to carry out the business of colonization. He says, "it is a shameful and unblessed thing, to take the scum of people, and wicked and condemned men, to be the people with whom to plant;" and in another place, that "no known bankrupt, for shelter; no murderer, or other wicked person, to avoid the law; nor known heretic or schismatic, should be suffered to go into these countries." In another place, he says he gave his advice to the King "touching this matter of plantation, and

I was invited this to do, by the remembrance that when the Lord Chief Justice, deceased, (Popham,) served in the place wherein I now serve, he labored greatly in the last project, touching the plantation of Munster, which hath given more light by the errors thereof, than by the direction of the same, what to follow." So that the allegation of Lloyd, on whom reliance is placed to sustain the position that Bacon charged the Popham community as "the scum of people and wicked and condemned men," is entirely groundless. The mistakes in colonization against which he would guard the King, were suggested by this Munster plantation, and not by that at Sagadahock. He does not even allude to the latter as having in any manner affected his opinions.

Rees' Cyclopaedia, the material articles of which were probably prepared by men versed in the particular matter pertaining to the signification of important words, says, under the word Colony, "The first settlers of *all the Colonies* of New England were men of irreproachable character, though not very enlightened in their views, or polished in their manners. In process of time, *by convicts*, who were banished men of desperate fortunes; men of abandoned lives." This statement comes from some one well versed in the colonial and political history of the country. No man will presume to deny that the Popham colony was one of the first established in New England. Neither can it be a question whether this is the intended import of the language of these authors when they speak of "the first colonies." It does not refer to those of Plymouth or Massa-

chusetts, because these banished men of desperate fortune and abandoned lives, were sent before either of these plantations were attempted. They came over to Virginia in large numbers in 1609.

These authorities would justify the inference that all the colonists were worthy and honorable men. But as before remarked, we do not assume such high ground. It is possible, and even probable, that the number may have comprehended some whose lives did not bring much honor to the race, or who had been violators of the law, disturbers of the peace, etc. If there were none such, its composition must have made it a wonderful exception to any body or company of men ever gathered together for physical labor. Still the deep interest of Popham, Gorges, and Bacon, in the plantation, might have brought to the work a class of men unsullied by any such obliquities. Of this I have no occasion to inquire. We claim for them no such character. Our controversy is with the charge, "that the Sagadahock colonists were pressed to the enterprise as endangered by the law, or their own necessities"—that they were convicts, etc.

By a careful examination of all the authorities, which have been cited by the opponents of the celebration, not more than one of them, I think, can be regarded as relevant to the charge. About the time of which the authors of these extracts speak, England was establishing and had plantations in every direction—in the north of Ireland, at Wexford, at Longford, at Bermuda, or the Summer Islands, at Barbadoes, St. Christopher, Jamestown, Newfoundland,

the Indies, and other places. The poet Alexander, Earl of Sterling, speaks specially of the Popham Plantation, and says: "The first company that went of purpose to inhabit there, near to Sagadahock, were pressed to the enterprise, as endangered by the law or by their own necessities."

In reverting to ancient history, we must remember that some of the worst features of humanity, which are still exhibited on the face of society, notwithstanding a refined civilization has laid them under its ban and execration, were then more prominent, and were even countenanced and nourished by the superstitions and excitements of the age. The period when Puritanism was in its first stages of development, was, from the very nature of the race, one well fitted for the nurture of an uncharitable and slanderous spirit. When one's deepest thoughts are stirred, the outward manifestations are frequently not very creditable to God's children. Slander, though sometimes even the offspring of quiet religious sensibilities, was then by no means an uncommon element in the intercourse of life. The civilized world was excited in the awakening of the human mind to new perceptions of its rights, and to new aspirations for adventure, and for the amelioration of the condition of man's temporal being. And in the necessarily contravening agencies of the hour, bickerings were engendered, and thence anathemas were fulminated, and denunciations broadcast, which were as groundless and unauthorized as are the reckless aspersions which grow out of the base political contentions of the present day. Gov. Winthrop, whom no one can regard as other

than a pure-minded and honest man, charged the settlers at Shawmut, R. I., as being “blasphemers against God and all magistrates,” merely because of their more liberal religion as expounded by Gorton; whom the court also denounced as “a blasphemous enemy of the true religion of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and a part of its members determined that he should die for his wickedness. The brethren and sisters of the church declared him to be “a pestilent seducer, a damnable heretic.” Cotton Mather also says of the banished heretics of Rhode Island, that they were “a generation of libertines and Familists, Antinomians and Quakers, inhabiting the fag end of creation.” Even the colonial assemblies in their legislation denounced the Friends, as “cursed Quakers,” “vagabond Quakers,” “incorrigible rogues.” Roger Williams, John Wheelright, Ann Hutchinson, and numerous others, in the early days of the settlement of New England, were subjected to similar groundless reproach. But who does not know that these were all persons of pure minds and irreproachable character, whom the most exalted morality of the present day would readily embrace as its friends and supporters. And yet they were all endangered by the law and pressed into exile.

And how was it with the Brownists or Puritans in England, at the very time of which we are speaking? Endangered by the law every hour, pressed into exile by their necessities, “beset and watched,” says Bancroft, “night and day,” stigmatized as vipers, and by the application to them of every opprobrious epithet afforded by the vocabulary of

scandal ; and of whom King James says, “I will make them conform, or I will harry them out of the land, or else worse,” “only hang them ; that’s all.”

The Star Chamber, the Ecclesiastical Court, the High Commission, had full power to reform errors, heresies, and schisms, and to make inquiries by the rack, torture, inquisition, and imprisonment, and to fine at their will and pleasure, to punish crimes at their discretion. Queen Elizabeth had said, that she was raised up by God, as supreme ruler over the church, and that all innovations were dangerous to the government and merited severe punishment. So also thought Lord Bacon. Uniformity in religion, he said, was absolutely necessary, and no toleration could safely be given to sectaries ; and accordingly in 1593 an act was passed, entitled “An Act to retain her Majestie’s subjects in due obedience,” and all who did not conform to the regimen of the church must abjure the realm, or endure the penalties of disobedience. Breach of the Act of Uniformity was punished by fine, confiscation, and imprisonment. It was even felony to maintain any opinions against the ecclesiastical government. The law laid its hands upon Puritans, Catholics, Independents, and dissenters of every class. Two Arians under the title of heretics were even burnt at the stake. Strange as it may seem, even the Puritans themselves, seem to have sympathized with the principles upon which the law was based, and it is said would have despised King James if he had not enforced it.

And now, let me ask, who were the men endangered by the law at this period? In the very year 1607, when the tide of religious excitement was at its height, the Puritans were compelled to flee from the country, and some of them departed for Amsterdam, while the Sagadahock colony, over the waters, sought the western wilderness. The number of dissenters, and recusants of every kind, cannot be computed. Sir Walter Raleigh said he was “afraid there were nearly twenty thousand Brownists in England,” and of all other denominations probably the number was not less. Of these how small a portion went into Holland.

With this dark page of memorable English history before him, how can a descendant of the Puritans reconcile it to his own judgment, to his God-given sense of what is true and just, to send forth to the world, such an interpretation of the language of that period, as that his readers must deduce from it the infamy of even the Puritans themselves! If there is any one fact in history upon which we may with confidence rely, it is that the best of men, the conscientious and the true, the friends of education and virtue, of civil and religious freedom, the careful and devoted students of revealed truth, those who were ready to submit to every sacrifice rather than compromit their obligations to God and duty, were the persons who, at this time, were endangered by the law, and pressed by their necessities into exile. Many of these dissenters were destitute of wealth, and “saw poverty coming upon them like an armed man,” and they

were thus compelled for a time at least to leave the country. Some of the Puritans fled to Holland. Others of more adventurous spirit, and perhaps of different religious views, probably chose to unite in this expedition to the new world. At any rate we may well infer from the knowledge which we have of human tendencies, that in the emergency, as many would be as likely to select the latter course as the former, especially when we know what eminent and worthy persons would thus be their companions. Capt. John Smith, who knew them as well as any one, designates them as “those noble captains.” We know also that Hakluyt, the Prebendary, Crashaw, and Dr. Symonds were deeply interested in these colonial enterprises, and in their sermons urged Christians and true men to embark in them. These exhortations we believe were not without effect.

The law for the disposition of rogues and vagabonds enacted ten years previously, had probably done its work to a great extent; so that but few of that class were now commorant in the kingdom. To understand, therefore, the import of this charge of Sir William Alexander, one must acquaint himself with the condition of affairs in England at the time to which it refers; and we do not hesitate to assert that such was the preponderance of these falsely denominated criminals over those actually guilty of crime, that all the presumptions of law forbid the translation which has been put on the charge. To be endangered by the law, no more implied criminal pollution, than unyielding fidelity to moral and Christian obligation.

And besides, the expression when used now, does not ordinarily imply any local guilt. It only expresses the tendency of one's conduct toward some offense. If a man is from day to day using disloyal language, speaking slanderously of his neighbor, retailing intoxicating liquors, or neglecting any legal obligation, we say of him he is in danger of the law. But we never apply that language to one who has been guilty of murder, robbery, or theft. On such, at once, the law lays its hand.

But to return to the charge of Sir William Alexander; only two classes are named by him, criminals and the poor, as making up the emigration. Being in the alternative, the construction may be that they were all criminals, or all poor men, impelled to enlist by crime or necessity. As a whole every one must admit the statement to be false. We know that there were men of note in the number, of whom we cannot predicate either of the charges. The only construction, therefore, which we can reasonably put on the statement is, that a *part* of them went out for the causes stated, and these might have gone into the service for necessary employment. If they did, we honor them for it. Poverty is no dishonor to humanity, and a readiness for any work to meet its demands, exhibits a worthy and commendable spirit. It is probably true that many of them were men whose necessities led them to enroll their names for the expedition. Some are pressed by their circumstances to any work which presents itself. Thousands go into the

army from the same impulse. Undoubtedly, it has been by the instrumentality of men of that condition, that most national colonies have been built up. Hume says, "all the colonies in America were peopled gradually by the necessitous and indigent, who at home increase neither wealth nor population, and that these plantations have promoted the navigation, encouraged the industry, and even perhaps multiplied the inhabitants of the mother country." And no one familiar with the prominent aspects of human life, will doubt that such was the origin of our settlements. But Hume nowhere intimates that criminals, or abandoned and desperate men, had any agency in building up or defeating any colonial enterprise in America. But this is the material part of the charge against the emigrants to the Sagadahock.

I take it for granted that it was intended to apply this character to only a portion of the company. Otherwise the charge would evince a recklessness of expression, not indicative of a rigid regard to truth. I know that poets are in the habit of taking such liberties in the use of language. Imagination has the direction of the pen as much as fact. But I have no occasion to impute such an aberration to Sir William Alexander. What were the relations existing between him as the proprietor of Nova Scotia, and the claimants to the province of Maine, I have not thought it necessary to inquire, for it is very probable that a careful investigation would so explain, or apply the paragraph adduced from him, to sustain the charge against these colonists, that he would be freed from the reproach of being the slan-

derer of a brave and self-sacrificing company, defeated in their noble purposes by the interposing adversities of an inscrutable Providence.

But it may be added that the words of the English statute (even admitting that he intended the import which the historic reader might accord to them) do not necessarily imply any moral obliquity; as by its terms men of unimpeachable character might be subject to its condemnation. It provided that poor or begging scholars, idle persons "using any craft, palmistry, physiognomy, pretending to tell fortunes, or such other like fantastical imaginations," proctors, procurers, patent-gatherers, fencers, common players of interludes, jugglers, tinkers, peddlers, petty chapmen, common laborers who would not work at prices fixed by those who would employ them, should be deemed rogues and vagabonds, and thus subject to expatriation; a classification sufficiently comprehensive to include many of the loafers and gentlemen of the present day.

How any of these adventurers were endangered by the law is not explained. By any construction which I can put on the charge it is *felo de se*. If they were convicts and were transported here by decree of Popham, then their return to England would be greeted only by the halter. Death has always been the penalty of such a violation of the judgment of transportation. It is conclusive that they never returned, or that they were not banished convicts. If there was any other judgment against them than that of transportation, then Popham, and no other judge in England, had

power to wrest them from its penalties; to take them from the jails, or any other place where the law had ordered them. It is just as certain, too, as any fact can be made by legal or civil history, that no statute authorized transportation of criminals to America until many years after the death of Popham. It is admitted that there is *no evidence* of banishment hither till 1619. The act of 1598 substituting banishment for other penalties, and of which Popham is said to have been the author, gave no authority for that purpose. Blackstone does not even allude to it, and Christian in his notes on Blackstone merely remarks, "it is said exile was then first introduced." But it was many years afterward before transportation to America was allowed by statute. Such is the plain testimony of the books. Any act authorizing such transportation thither would have been an absolute nullity. There were no means of carrying it into effect. No colonies then existed here, and there was no intercourse with the country of such a character that criminals could be conveyed to their destination. If Popham stocked plantations with convicts, they were plantations then in existence. He knew of no plantation here up to the time of his death. The company which left England under his auspices, had as yet, no location, and to him there was no certainty it ever would have one. As a judge, he could no more order a criminal to be sent here than to be transported to the moon. If transportation was authorized by statute, England had plantations enough as before stated to meet all its provisions.

I may also here say, that penal colonies must be national colonies. No judge would have the power to trespass on private rights, by crowding criminals into the territorial possessions of individuals or corporations, and thus virtually dominating all honest and true men, upon whose action alone could the prosperity and success of the plantation be secured.

But we have not yet wholly disposed of the charge. This expression "endangered by the law," may admit of another construction: that these men had been guilty of some offenses and were thus in jeopardy from their transgressions and liable to prosecution as criminals. How such men were so situated as to be pressed into this enterprise I cannot conjecture. If one had been guilty of a crime of any character, we should, I think, be much puzzled to discover, how Chief Justice Popham could step in, and wrest him from the punishment which awaits his offense. I should like to be informed in what age of the world, dark as it sometimes has been, a judge has been allowed to come down from the bench, and take offenders under his special care, and shield them from punishment. By the law of England as then and now existing, Chief Justice Popham would have been an accessory and liable to transportation from such a procedure. The man who attempts to defeat public justice by aiding and abetting a criminal in his escape from the vengeance of the law, makes himself liable to all the penalties to which the offender was exposed. What must be the regimen, or moral and social status of any community where the Chief

Justice is seen going about hunting up criminals to rescue them from punishment, while he himself is a conservator of the peace, and bound by law to administer justice to them in the way pointed out by statute.

Then, again, how was he to accomplish his object by such a proceeding? If these men had the terrors of the law staring them in the face, and were thus for the time secured from immediate peril, were they not just as much endangered by the law, when they returned to England? Nine months absence from the kingdom worked no condonation of their crimes. Their liability to punishment was undiminished; and if the purposes of the home company were defeated by an inexcusable abandonment of the plantation, the exasperation of the Chief Justice and his copartners, would not have done much to avert from them the penalties now more deserved than when they departed. In any view of this charge against the colonists, it has not the shadow of a foundation.

And here I cannot but express my surprise, that any careful historic student should have so misapplied and misapprehended the numerous extracts which have been cited in aid of these groundless invectives against these planters as to have relied on them to sustain the position assumed in regard to their moral attributes. I have remarked before that not more than one of his citations, implying the infamy of this company, had in the mind of the author any reference to it. And as to the calumny of Sir William Alexander, I think it manifest that it has no support in the imperfect his-

tory which we have of their character and action. The whole prestige of the enterprise is against it. I have not seen his map of New England, and take the remark as I find it with the speech. Bancroft calls him "an ambitious writer of turgid rhymes and tragedies." But passing this as so contrary to all other authority, we repeat that all the remaining extracts are wanting in the main attribute, applicability to the matter in issue. So far as reference is made to American colonies, the citations apply only to Jamestown, and perhaps others initiated after the death of Popham. It cannot be otherwise. Let any one read the chapter in Bancroft's History of the United States, in relation to Jamestown, and he will at once be convineed that the writer had that colony in view. It answers to their several descriptions in every particular, and it clearly sustains the foregoing argument. The first company that landed there, was not a company of vagabonds or culprits; but of the one hundred and five emigrants, about half of them were gentlemen, and in England then, no vagabond or culprit wore that appellation. They had been of indolent and free habits, somewhat dissolute, but were not criminals or involuntary exiles. There were twelve laborers, four carpenters, and a few other mechanics. They arrived in James river in December, 1606, and having viewed various places, established themselves at Jamestown. But there was great want of appropriate faculty, skill, and judgment among them. Most of them had been unaccustomed to work; more familiar with the drawing-room than with labor; and

in consequence of imprudent management half of them died in one year. More colonists were sent for, and in 1609, came out the vagabonds, criminals, etc. Bancroft says of them: these immigrants were "dissolute gallants, *packed off to escape worse destinies at home*, broken tradesmen, gentlemen impoverished in spirit and fortune: rakes and libertines, more fit to corrupt than to found a commonwealth." So that Smith, who found no fault with his first company, said a thousand such men were of but little worth. Such was the contempt with which this South Virginia Plantation was regarded in England, that it was introduced by the stage poets, as says Bancroft, as a theme of scorn and derision. Those who were members of the colony said, "this plantation has undergone the reproofs of the base world. Our own brethren laugh us to scorn; and papists and players, the scum and dregs of the earth, mock such as help build up the walls of Jerusalem."

Bancroft in his history, ascribes no such character to the Popham colonists, neither can any such be drawn from the early accounts of them which were published to the world. No one, who had any interest in the colony, even hints that any such men were found among them. The only charge against the colony was, a want of fortitude to abide the future developments of their situation, and coining excuses for abandoning the plantation.

But suppose for the moment the charge to be true, to the extent intended by one of the authors. I presume he would

not have his readers understand, that the whole emigration were embraced in the denunciation. He would not include the officers. If there were some among the whole number, whose lives were not what they should have been, are the company to be branded as criminals? We do not in many cases, consider the moral condition or whose physical powers we are to rely, as even a material subject of inquiry. As we have before remarked, the nature of the enterprise is never judged by or through any such medium. On the contrary, we carry even to an unreasonable extent, the habit of attributing all the skill, and ascribing all the praise and renown of successful action, to those only to whom were committed the chief management and direction of the work. We seek for skillful and honest officers, and never feel that we are leaving our interests in jeopardy, by neglecting to ascertain the character of the sub-agents. The Old Dominion, until its recent mad aberration, had maintained and was proud of its high position, notwithstanding a majority of its people had, in view of the world, scarcely any character whatever. I do not say that such an indifference to the moral element in our operatives is wise, or immaterial to success. On the contrary, I know, that it finds no support in the principles of the grand economy of the Infinite; and it is not out of place here to add, that such was without doubt the opinion of Sir Ferdinando Gorges. Of all the great and the good in 1637, including New England's noblest, the Carvers, the Bradfords, the Winslows, the Winthrops, and Dudleys, he was selected "to reform the evils and

mischiefs," which had come over the Massachusetts and Plymouth colonies, and was appointed Governor of the whole territory. Whatever an interested or jaundiced criticism may now say of him, King Charles and his council accorded to him a noble spirit, and a wise and trustful judgment. So also did the Plymouth colonists. They had involuntarily landed where they had no right to establish themselves, and finding they could not safely abide there, they resorted to him, and availed themselves of his well recognized influence to obtain a grant of the territory, in which he succeeded "to the particular satisfaction and content of them all." Palfray says of him, that "he had an uncommon talent for business, and indefatigable love of labor." A man who can believe that such an one would select a band of vagabonds, rogues, and criminals, to carry out his own purposes of establishing a plantation which should expand into a great and flourishing Commonwealth, must be imbued with a degree of credulity which would swallow the most absurd quixotism ever offered to the mind of man.

But, after all, the Christian rule of determining character ever has been, and ever will be, the most reliable. Taking this as the standard, is there anything discoverable in the deportment of the colonists while here, on which the denunciation can lay hold as authority? Is not the evidence plenary that they were peaceful, industrious, and obedient in carrying forward the object of the founders of the colony? What says the only authentic history of their operations?

"Most of the hands labored in building the fort, on which twelve guns were mounted : and the carpenters in building the pinnace : Captain Gilbert with a part of the colony went off on a cruise west. Captain Davis was up the river with another portion. They also dug wells, built fifty houses, a church and a store-house," not, of course, like the houses, or like the churches, of modern civilization. When Captain Davis returned from England in the spring, though President Popham was dead, all things were found "in a good state of forwardness. Many furs were obtained, good store of sarsaparilla, and the pinnace was finished." Now, it is well known that the winter through which they had passed was one of the most severe on record : while these planters had only been inured to the mild climate of the west of England, whose snow and ice seldom interfere with human activities. Here then it seems to me there is evidence of the most satisfactory character, that these persons were not only intent on, and obedient to, the purposes for which they were sent here, but were also men of energy and determination. John Smith says they "found nothing but extreme extremities." To have survived these hitherto inexperienced rigors of the winter, such houses as they had must have been built with some considerable care, and with special regard to warmth and protection from the fury of the storm. The building also of a vessel of fifty tons during the same inclement season, when the timber and materials were to be cut and brought from the woods, was by no means, an inconsiderable work. Purchas evidently regards this as a remarka-

ble feat. Men unaccustomed to these winter severities, could find but little opportunity for such out-door labor. Strachey says, virtually, that they had done all which was expected of them.

Such positive testimony as this seems to negative completely, all charges of the unsuitableness of the settlers for the business on which they were sent. But there is circumstantial or negative evidence to the same effect. Gorges had taken a deep interest in establishing plantations on these shores, and spent much of his property in his endeavors to carry out his wishes. One defeated in his aspirations, the object of which he had the fullest confidence of realizing, is always ready to charge the failure on the immediate agents employed, if any foundation for the charge can be discovered, in their action upon the matter committed to them. Yet in his account of this colony he nowhere even hints at any inefficiency, any neglect of duty, any disorder or disobedience on the part of officers or men ; but ascribes all, as does Strachey, and other writers of the time, to the unfortunate death of the president, and of the principal supporter of the movement at home, Chief Justicee Popham. When he is urging laborers to come forward and embark in the profitable enterprise of speedy emigration to the new country, and when he had occasion to apologize for his failures, he never attributes his ill-success to any negligence or demoralization on the part of those, to whom he had intrusted this plantation. No man can read the eighth chapter of Gorges' brief narration, and not be fully satisfied that

such a thought never came over his mind. He makes no allusion to any mutiny or contention, the invariable manifestations of desperadoes, whenever and wherever congregated. So far as any light has come down to us on the action of the colonists, all things went on smoothly and well. Neither Strachey or any contemporary writer imputes to them any unfaithfulness to their employers. The destruction of their store-house and provisions by fire, the death of the president, and of the chief patron of the plantation, and the unparalleled severity of the weather, are stated by all, as the causes of the failure. Now if these men were such desperate spirits as they are alleged to have been, how are these things to be explained?

It is indeed said by Sewall in his *Ancient Dominions of Maine*, a work indicative of much labor and great research, for which the author deserves remuneration far beyond what has yet been awarded to him, that there is a tradition that the colonists came in collision with the natives after the death of their president. This statement I suppose is based on the same fact mentioned in Morse & Parish's history of New England. But I think it has not sufficient reliable authority to be entitled to any place in our history. No others of the many writers of these times seem to give any credence to it. Increase Mather says, immediately after concluding his account of the Sagadahock colony, "as yet there was not (so far as I can learn) any disturbance from the Indians, then the only natives of the land. But not long after this an unworthy shipmaster whose name was

Hunt, ‘seized and sold’ twenty-seven of them into slavery.” Purchas also says, “Some of us resolved once more to try” a plantation, and sent out Captain Hobson. “But in all human affairs there is nothing more certain than the uncertainty thereof.” “A little before this, one Hunt, a worthless fellow, had been there and seized” twenty-four of the natives and sold them as slaves. From this the savages contracted a hatred against the English, and studied for revenge, and so the enterprise was abandoned. This action of Hunt he says, was the cause of all the troubles with them in the north-eastern parts of this land. When it is said in the Jesuit Relations, that the natives defeated the English in 1608 and 1609, reference cannot be had to these colonists, who, or most of them, returned to England in the beginning of 1608. Others were here fishing and trafficking, and Gorges says of them, “in their manners and behavior they were worse than the savages,” and he specially enumerates their iniquities. These were the men, if any, about the Kennebec to whom tradition refers. I can add, surely, that Gorges had no such knowledge of any bad conduct in his planters.

The second leading objection to the commemoration, is the alleged entire inefficiency of the Sagadahock enterprise on the subsequent colonization of New England, or its barrenness of any profitable results. After a lapse of two hundred and fifty-seven years from the landing, the question, what effect the colony had in the promotion of this great work,

becomes of difficult solution. We have but very imperfect records of its history. To my mind, it is very manifest, that beside the evidence which has found its way down through the many generations intervening, more particular accounts of it were current in the years following its habitation here than are now within our reach. Strachey wrote his sketch of it, he says, "to epitomize a few things which have not by any one been published or written." This epitome covers but a little more than a diary of two months. Gorges' brief narration was written many years after, and is only a general history of his connection with it. Some few facts not stated in these works are found in other publications of the century. Much, which before has not seen the light here, has just been published in the Memorial Volume: and there can be little doubt that the researches now making in the English archives, will be successful in leading to important revelations bearing on this inquiry.

But enough now beams out of published history to prove that it was the received sentiment for years after the return of the colony, that this enterprise was the initiative of those movements which led to the settlement of New England. The immediate result of it was undoubtedly inauspicious to those on whom devolved the expense; and for the time it discouraged any general or large designs for plantation. Probably also this apparent lapse of colonization might have engendered the belief in France that a door was thereby opened to a more sure appropriation of the territory to her own possession. But the action of the French, under this

new inspiration, aroused England to the necessity of more effectual movements to secure her own title. The encroachments of the French, therefore, following the evacuation of Sabino, do not prove that evacuation disastrous to the cause of English colonization. Adverse results are not unfrequently the inducement to action more wise, and thence more auspicious in issues. "Gorges," says Belknap, "was heartily engaged in the settlement of the country. He sunk his estate and reaped no profit. Yet his enterprising spirit excited emulation in others, who had the advantage of improving his plans, and avoiding his mistakes."

Now whether the prevalent opinion of the age had its basis in this incidental or contingent result of the plantation, we have not at present sufficient data whereby to determine. But that it was the commonly received sentiment, that in its various relations it was the introduction to the settlement of New England, is very clear. The address of the Scotch adventurers to King James in 1630, declares that New England was planted by Chief Justicee Popham; and that by this possession its territory was sennred to the crown of Great Britain. The averments of other writers found in the notes to Poor's vindication of Gorges, confirm the same fact. King James also, sustained by his council declares, that Gorges first seized the coasts of New England, thus disregarding all which had been done by voyagers in previous years. Champlain, in addressing the king, says, "in 1607, England seized the coast of New France, where lies Acadia, on which they imposed the name of New Eng-

land." In a work entitled "Encouragement to Colonies," published in 1625, it is said "Sir John Popham sent the first company that went to inhabit there, near to Sagadahock." Captain John Mason in a letter to Sir Edward Coke, in 1632, says, "Plantations in New England have been settled about twenty-five years," that is from 1607. Gorges, the grandson of Sir Ferdinando, in his description of New England, says, "in 1606, the country began to be settled by the English by public authority, they built a fort at the mouth of the Sagadahock," the most significant emblem of national claim and authority, saying to all others, stand away at your peril. Bloom says, all attempts to settle the country previous to the Popham plantation were utter failures, clearly importing that such was not the issue of this. And with all this, contemporary New England authorities concur. The first sentence of Increase Mather's History of New England, the preface to which is dated September 14, 1677, is, "It is now above seventy years since that part of this continent, which is known by the name of New England, was discovered and possession thereof taken by the English." Hubbard, in 1677, published a work with this title, "A narrative of the troubles with the Indians in New England from the *first* planting thereof in the year 1607, to this present year 1677." Here, the first thing which meets the eye of the reader, is the plain declaration standing out in large capitals, that "the Popham colonists planted New England." For no one will pretend that any other colony in 1607, attempted to fix a settlement on our shores. This declaration

is here made in such a manner, as to call to it the attention of all objectors and cavilers.

But the authors of the seventeenth century are not the only writers who have proclaimed the important fact that here began the colonization of New England. In the account of ancient Pemaquid, as published in our Historical Collections in 1857, the writer says of the first landing of the Popham Colony, "Such was the auspicious welcome from fair Monahigan; and here did the feet of the pioneers of English colonization on our shores, first press American soil." As a lawyer I venerate the record. Human memory may be faithless to its trust, but the record never forgets.

To this mass of testimony is to be added the evidence before mentioned. The fifty houses built by the colony, though perhaps not much superior to the Indian wigwams, and the church, without doubt the first house of public worship on these shores, were efficient agencies in the maintenance of this possession. When the colonists left the country, these houses still remained, as notice to the world of English claim and title. This erection of houses and other buildings affords strong evidence of right and of possession. Civilized Europe regarded it then as now, as continued occupancy while such erections remained. The dwelling, though tenantless, is constructive possession. But we have no right to assume that none of them were occupied in subsequent years. On the contrary, there is strong presumption that they were still resorted to as accommodation for British subjects in their traffic with the natives. The

Jesuit Relations affirm that the English were there in 1609; and all the historians affirm that this fishing and trafficking on the coast was continued and becoming more extensive from year to year. Sir Francis Popham sent his ships there annually, and all along the shore, the careful reader of history will be satisfied that Englishmen had begun to have some kind of a habitation. But suppose that there was but a solitary subject of King James abiding in the land, English laws and ordinances which had been promulgated by Popham, would still be here, with their beneficent ministry, to shield and protect all who should come to these shores. Though this unholy rebellion which is now upon us, should continue until the last remnant of humanity should stand amidst its desolations, the constitution and laws of this great republic will still remain to embrace and protect all who shall come here to dwell.

The works to which we have referred, were published at various periods during the seventeenth century, and during all that time no counter statements or denials of the principal fact alleged, have yet been discovered in any of the histories or other publications then extant. The acquiescence was general in the fact that the Popham enterprise began the settlement of New England. The averments to that effect are made in direct positive terms, not only before the landing at Plymouth, but even into the eighteenth century. Many voyages were made to the coast for the purposes of discovery, before and after the settlement at Sagadahock. Men were then as aspiring and eager for fame as

now. The discovery and settlement of the new world, absorbed the attention of many adventurous spirits, who would be as jealous of their rights and as sensitive to their claims to the honors of the world, as any of the race at the present day. How then are we to explain this universal acquiescence in this positively declared precedence of the Popham Colony, if any other persons or corporations had claims invested with a higher authority? What man, if he had the spirit of a man, or what body of men cognizant of an honest title to the merit of having initiated the great work of securing to their nation, and settling the new world, would have suffered this glory to be rest from them, without uttering a word of objection to these disparaging assumptions of the Popham colonists? or these unauthorized statements of these authors of the age? This silence of all pretenders, if there were any such, carries with it the conviction that the merit was awarded to those to whom it was due. The declaration of Sewall, therefore, in his *Ancient Dominions of Maine*, that "the Sagadahock enterprise was undoubtedly the beginning proper of European colonial life with the English race, not only in Maine, but in New England," has a sure basis in the well declared sentiment of the seventeenth century.

But the argument is not confined to this evidence of the direct agency of the colony in promoting the settlement of the country. There were collateral influences going out from it auxiliary to the work, which probably permeated the home community, as well as the tribes which had hitherto

been lords of the wilderness. The letter of President Pop-  
ham to the king, in which he says, "my well considered  
opinion is that in these regions the glory of God may be  
easily evidenced, the empire of your majesty enlarged, and  
the public welfare of the Britons speedily augmented,"  
must have awakened a spirit of emigration throughout the  
nation; while at the same time it awakened in the govern-  
ment an interest in securing the possession and title of so  
desirable a territory. This it was, probably, which induced  
the determination, and the order to Argal to drive the French  
from the territory. But the necessary association of the  
colonists with the natives must have been still more opera-  
tive in working out a secure establishment of the race on  
this continent, by softening existing savage asperities, and  
kindling in their uncultivated minds, some sense of the  
value of education, and the other innumerable blessings of  
a Christian civilization. They were here eight or nine  
months, and during that period there seems to have been no  
restriction to a free intercourse with the tribes. Skidwares,  
who had been treacherously carried over the waters, and  
had had the opportunity of witnessing the aptitude of moral,  
social, and political culture, to minister to the comfort of  
humanity, was one of the expedition, and must have done  
much to promote a friendly communion with the wild sons  
of the forest, and to inspire them with a respect for the  
white man, and thereby induce a desire to acquaint them-  
selves with the means and agencies by which he had been  
enabled to subdue all things to himself. When the vessels

came to anchor the Indians came on board. Some remained all night. The next day they came again, with some of their women, for trade. The colonists visited them at their houses, where, through the instrumentality of Skidwares, after their fears were subdued, they were kindly received and entertained; and though this native left them and returned to his tribe, he carried with him the humane and softening influences, which he had acquired by his contact with civilized life. The Indians came to them afterward in large numbers. On a Sunday, Nahanada, and the principal men of the tribes, attended their public meetings both morning and evening, and with great reverence and silence. One of them was so captivated by the service that he wished to remain there sometime longer. All received gracious and pleasant treatment, and left the colonists with the best of feelings toward them. The effect of this interview was highly favorable to a modification of the Indian character. Bloom says, "the people seemed much affected with our men's devotion, and would say, King James is a good king, and his God a good God, but our god Tanto, a naughty god, whom they had worshiped only through fear." Who can tell the effect of such a conversion as is implied in that fact. Strachey gives us no history of the doings or daily life of the colonists, or of their relations with the natives for the last six months of their habitancy at Sabino. But we have no reason to suppose that the intercourse thus commenced was broken off, or that the visits of the Indians were discontinued, or the occasional enjoyment of public worship

with the plantation abandoned. The inferences are altogether adverse to such a conclusion. They undoubtedly kept up their visits and traffic, as long as the planters remained. The results of such intercourse may be well imagined. A great transformation had evidently through some instrumentality been wrought in the character of Someset. As Thornton says, he was a glory to us; though, why a glory if we had nothing to do with his conversion, or in the formation of his true and noble character? It is not very likely that he received much civilizing or religious instruction from the fishermen who landed on the coast. Gorges' account of these white men precludes any such judgment as that. It is much more probable that the truly Christian attributes which he exhibited, were the result of the beneficent influences which went out from the stated Christian services at Sabino, and his intercourse with the colonists, than of any other agencies, which are discoverable in the histories of the age. While then, as we have before stated, Maine, in her Gorges, secured to the Puritans the place of habitation, on which they had involuntarily fallen, "the voice of Samoset," says Sewall, "crying, welcome English, which came to the Plymouth colonists from the environing forests, was probably the salvation of that colony."

And now, why should we not commemorate this new era in the progress of civilization? What more important event in unrolling the scroll of history meets our vision, than the inauguration of the great enterprise of creating as it were, a

new world, where the human mind might expand its powers in the erection of a social, intellectual, and moral superstructure, which should be for a wonder to the nations, and an asylum for wronged and oppressed humanity, in its escape from the evils and bondage of eastern tyranny and despotism? This extended territory, large enough for the support of all the inhabitants of earth, had through the succession of ages from its creation, continued an unbroken wilderness, where ignorance and barbarism had held their orgies in the moral darkness which overshadowed it throughout its entire expanse. More than a hundred years had elapsed since Columbus had revealed the new world to the nations of Europe. The voice of Infinite Wisdom for the fulfillment of its great design, had come over the waters, calling for the culture of its virgin soil. Though the new earth was beautiful, and grand in its wildness, yet in the conception of the Great Architect, it was to become more grand, and more magnificent, in being subdued to the great purposes of humanity, in becoming the field for the growth and expansion of the human intellect, where truth should shed its heavenly beams, and where the holy religion of the Redeemer, by its sympathies, its refining and purifying influences, its gentleness and its harmonizing spirit, should tune all hearts for the highest enjoyments of earth, and the communion and holy orisons of heaven. Barbarism, nurtured through unnumbered generations, with all its cruel attributes and superstitions, was to be subjected to the softening and subduing influences of the arts, learning, and en-

lightenment of civilized Europe. The wild man of the forests was to be redeemed from the thralldom of ignorance and inhumanity, and the whole land to be made bright in the glow of freedom, literature, morality, and religion. Was not then the first glimpse of the awaking of Europe to the great work, to be hailed by every philanthropic heart as the harbinger of momentous results? Was there not in the spirit which then began to spring into life, the spirit of resolution and enterprise to take hold of and carry it forward, something noble and heroic and worthy of a great nation? And when this sublime thought, this grand conception of securing this extensive territory to the blessings of a Christian civilization, was organized by Gorges and Popham for the purpose of an immediate development through the necessary activities and measures, who will say that that day was not one long to be remembered? And when the grand project had so far advanced, that the "Gift of God," in the words of Mr. Sewall, having survived the perils of the ocean "freighted with all the elements of European civilization, under the sanction of law and religion, began to land her cargo at the mouth of the Sagadahock," what man who has within him enough of the divine, to claim for himself the name of a man, would hesitate to award to that day an honorable distinction above the ordinary days of life? Why, if the Indian could for the occasion, have been so far transformed as to have had the sensibilities and foresight of cultivated life, and the instrumentalities of our public celebrations, bells and cannon would have sent their peans through

and over all the valleys and mountains of the land. Does any one deny the historic fact published to the world in 1625, that Sir John Popham sent the first colony that came on purpose to inhabit here, and that it landed at Sagadahock? Does any one deny the day which has been consecrated, to be the true day, when the planters first set foot on this then new domain of England? No such denials come from any source. Now in our public celebrations what do we claim to commemorate? Are they instituted in remembrance of the consequences alone, which have flowed from the accomplishment of some noble object, or in memory and honor of the noble, valiant, magnanimous, skillful, and self-sacrificing spirit by which that object has been attained? Why do we honor and hail with patriotic joy the Fourth of July? Not because of the innumerable blessings which we enjoy as a free and independent nation, coming down to us from the brave declaration of 1776; for this memorable day was celebrated long before our liberty and independence were secured. It was hallowed as spontaneously, and with as much zest in 1777, 1778, 1779, and 1780, as in any subsequent time. And yet there were dark periods during these years, when even the stoutest hearts trembled for the issue. The day was then honored and distinguished above other days, not because of the completion of the work of which that declaration was the programme, but rather in memory of the high and holy purpose, the patriotism, fearlessness, and true nobleness of the men, who thus dared to brave all the power of England, in consecrating heart and soul, and

life itself, to the great cause of freedom. And this is the truly sound, Christian basis of commemoration. Any other which excludes this, would indicate a forgetfulness of the great interests of humanity. If the labors and enterprise of men were only to be honored for their successful results, one of the most material elements of human progress would be completely paralyzed. As in law it is the animus which constitutes crime, so in the adjudications of social life, self-sacrifice, nobility, and devotion of soul alone, have any claim for praise and grateful remembrance. The man, who from the irresistible energies of an innate benevolence, is carried forward to the jeopardy of his own life, to the rescue of another from drowning, cannot be shorn of his honor by the fact, that by the Providence of God, his noble purpose was defeated.

So, if we had no evidence of even a partial success of the great enterprise, when on the nineteenth day of August, 1607, this new territory was consecrated by prayer, and dedicated to the sublime purpose of the moral, social, and Christian elevation of the race, in a land overshadowed through almost endless anterior ages by heathenish darkness, we might well come to remember together, those heroic spirits, those brave, courageous men, who through the perils of the ocean, had landed on this continent, animated by the glorious purpose of inaugurating it for its high destiny; that "brave and hardy crew," as says Willis, "who here planted the banner of St. George, and gave to Old England lawful and actual possession of a New England,

which for a hundred and fifty years was the fairest jewel of her crown."

They did not, indeed, fulfill to the letter the high purposes of the projectors. When heaven and earth together conspire to frustrate the counsels of man, it is by no means the part of wisdom, to disregard the monitions of such high authority. The chief patron of the colony had died. So had its president. Death also called home the second in command. The flames had laid waste their store-house and its contents ; and the unparalleled rigors of the winter had come over them with a power sufficient to chill all emotions of ambition, and they, or most of them, succumbed to the adversities of their condition. Purchas says, "the unseasonable winter was fit to freeze the heart of a plantation." Contemporary history records that these were the sole causes of the failure of the enterprise ; and charges no lack of fortitude or fidelity on the brave spirits to whom its destinies were committed.

But though through all their adversities a partial failure ensued, yet in its direct and incidental influences, it brought effectual aid to the great work of Christian civilization. We appeal once more to the writer of the article on Ancient Pemaquid, in our Historical Collections, as authority. Quoting from Strachey the fact that on the first Sunday after the arrival of the colony, and on the occasion of the organization of the government under the laws of England, a sermon was delivered by Mr. Seymour, their preacher, he adds, "Thus Puritanism tintured New England history

*at the start; the preacher and the sermon already detested in England, were happily inaugurated on New England soil, the chiefest features in her future policy and history; her very life."* Well is it then, that on this spot, some enduring monument should be erected,

"IN MEMORY OF

**George Popham,**

WHO FIRST FROM THE SHORES OF ENGLAND,

FOUNDED A COLONY IN NEW ENGLAND,

August, 1607.

HE BROUGHT INTO THESE WILDS,

ENGLISH LAWS AND LEARNING,

AND THE FAITH AND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST."

But it is said that these men in their migration to this wilderness, had other objects in view, than the planting and building up a Christian nation. Suppose they had. Where are the men, or where the body of men, who assume the physical labor of any great undertaking, who have no other object before them, than the benefit which may enure to the nation, the church, or the world, by their success? No more patriotic soldiery ever buckled on their armor, than that which now hazards life, and its genial associations, in the defense of this free and beneficent government, under whose auspices so much good has come to every fireside. But who thinks to entitle these noble men to the glory of success on the battle-field, or to the gratitude of the nation, that they should have entered the service with no eye to their monthly pay, or to the bounties offered by a patriotic

people? Who expects our armies to be recruited, except by the inspirations of a large pecuniary liberality on the part of our citizens? Who expects the minister of the gospel to labor for the redemption of humanity from the thraldom of sin, without pecuniary reward?

I may here add, that no valuable work, invention, or discovery ever loses its importance because it was the result of mere accident. Many of the material appliances, or auxiliaries to the happiness of human life, and the advancement of science and the useful arts, have come to the author, as it were, by inspiration; and yet we do not the less honor but almost reverence him, to whom we are indebted for these aids to human progress and comfort. The discovery of the gold mines of California, whereby a great and flourishing State has suddenly sprung into being with its churches and Protestant religion, in no degree loses its importance or value if the discoverer was animated with any other motives than patriotism, philanthropy, or religion; or because the discovery was accidental.

We sometimes celebrate the act, or the event; at other times we honor the actor by whose agency it was evolved. Sometimes, the skill, the arduous labor, energy, and perseverance of the man; at other times we immortalize his work. We may commemorate the noble enterprise of the Bristol projectors of the Popham Colony in its first development, in its landing at Hunnewell's Point, to take possession, and occupy the territory in the name of King James; or the resolution, bravery, and self-sacrifice of that noble

company, in hazarding the perils and deprivations which must come to them from the grand experiment; or we can commemorate the dedication on that day of this New England to the cause of civilization and religion. And in this view, in the pages of undisputed history, stand out these great facts, which should come home with power to every Christian heart. Here was offered the first Christian prayer in our own language, that ever broke forth from human lips on the shores of New England. Here on the 19th day of August, 1607, the first English minister of the Gospel of Peace, proclaimed the great truths of Christian salvation. Here, on that day, went out over the dead silence of the wilderness from a hundred Saxon voices, the first English hymn of adoration and praise to the great Creator, the God of the Universe; and here was erected the first Christian church, the emblem of all New England's power and greatness. Here also was the final resting-place of the first of her "illustrious dead." "A noble name," says Thornton, "lays sleeping here."

One would think that the mementoes which cluster around this spot, would be sufficient to attract thither every man who has any reverence for whatever is grand and worthy in the past, or any sympathies for those noble institutions which have made us a great nation, rich in all material resources, and invested with a moral power adequate to all the exigencies of our national life.









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